



Honorable John Stahl, Chairman  
House Committee on Family & Children Services  
S1186 House Office Building  
P.O. Box 30014  
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

Dear Representative Stahl:

As a partner with the Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) Network in Grand Rapids, I am pleased to offer support on behalf of the Grand Rapids Parks and Recreation Department for HB 5110.

Quality after school programs are critical for children and youth during out-of-school time. As a partner in the ELO Network, a community collaborative working to ensure every child has access to quality after school programs, we believe that programs fulfilling a set of defined quality standards of care are better equipped to meet the needs of the children they serve. We believe that HB 5110 will improve the accountability of after school programs across the state while enhancing opportunities for program accessibility and delivery in Michigan.

The Grand Rapids Parks and Recreation Department's "Recreation Reaps Rewards" program has been providing quality after school programming since 1992. The program has had the opportunity to serve as many as 7, 500 elementary-aged youth and teens in over thirty targeted neighborhoods. The primary goal of our program is to provide a safe, secure environment where participants have access to academic, enrichment, recreation and life skills activities that are designed to be more than just play. Through after school programming, participants enjoy present learning for future gains. These activities teach, promote and reward the development of character, self-esteem, socialization skills and problem solving abilities.

We appreciate you and your committee members for addressing this bill in such a timely manner and urge your support for passage. Thank you for your kind attention.

Sincerely,

Larry Barnes  
Recreation Services Specialist  
Grand Rapids Parks and Recreation Department